

## COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**August 6, 2002**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault and Forest

Communication from Deputy City Clerk Johnson, on behalf of the City Clerk, requesting the Board transfer \$34,000 from Contingency to the City Clerk budget to cover costs relative to the September 3, 2002 Special Municipal Election and providing an update relating to election issues.

Alderman Pinard moved to approve the transfer of \$34,000 from Contingency to the City Clerk budget. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Shea stated Lloyd Basinow brought up a point along with another person and I wondered is there any legitimacy to having a paper ballot at the September 10 election and eliminating the September 3 election in order to save a little bit of money and perhaps reward the people working at the polls with extra compensation.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied I would have to say that the Board always has the authority to rescind its action and pull back the election of September 3 and order it to a different election. We would note that we do already have the ballots printed. They are downstairs ready to go because the absentee process has to be initiated. It really would be up to the Board. If it wanted to change the date to September 10, it could at this point. We would have to double check the State laws in between because I think the number of days may create a problem.

Mayor Baines responded I thought we were told that we had to have it on September 3 was the timeline.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated you could not have a subsequent election in the general election. You would be forced to have another special election in any event and that was the point we made the first time.

Mayor Baines responded as I recall when it was presented to the Board we were told that we had to have it on that date because of the timeline. That is the way I

recall it being presented to us. We never were given the option that it could be held on September 10 so I am a little confused.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied it could have been held on September 10 at the time but the problem was that if the question passed you could not utilize the general election for running of candidates. There is a timeline by State law and I would have to double-check that and I would ask that the Board give us an opportunity to review that before you rescinded anything.

Mayor Baines asked so we still would have had the expense of a special election.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered yes you still would have the expense of a special election.

Mayor Baines replied okay I am glad that was clarified because I was a little confused.

Mayor Baines called for a vote on the motion to transfer \$34,000 from Contingency to the City Clerk's budget. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Communication from Everett Godbois, Moderator of Ward 11, requesting the Board revisit the proposal(s) relative to an increase in pay for election workers.

Alderman Thibault stated it really, really gets me upset if you will that the City of Manchester would be willing to let people work for under minimum wage. In looking at what the Ballot Inspectors and some of the other Moderators of the wards, what they get for pay for the amount of time that they have to be there, I would have to agree, your Honor, that there is a major problem here. I would urge this Board to take a minute, a minute, I would think is all that would be needed to at least give the people – our Moderators and the people who work in our wards, a fair wage. I am not looking for a major thing here, your Honor. What I am looking for is what is the minimum wage and maybe 5% or 10% above that to give to these people who are working their 14 or 15 hours or 13 hours on some of these elections. I would ask the Board's indulgence in looking at this very carefully before they make a decision. I believe that all of us, not just the elected officials, but all the people of this City are certainly vulnerable to this. This is something that I believe that this Board has to address and address properly in every ward of this City. I would urge this Board to look at this very carefully and come up with some conclusion whether it be tonight or can it be tabled to some other time when we can discuss it. I would certainly appreciate this Board looking at something

that I believe is one of the most important things in our electoral process. I believe that we are paying people below minimum wage. Is this legal? I don't know.

Mayor Baines asked Deputy Clerk Johnson to address the issue.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated the Clerk would just note that the City Clerk's Office did prepare three proposals for the Board on behalf of the election workers. The first proposal that was presented had to do with the Yarger Decker salary schedule. A second proposal in essence was a flat rate increase and the third proposal was basically a 10% increase over what they now receive. To provide a history, in 1998 that was the last time that they did receive an increase and in essence the rates doubled. They had gone from \$75 for Moderators to \$150 a day. The Ward Clerks are now at \$150 as well and Selectmen at \$125 and Ballot Inspectors at \$100. They do work a 13-hour day minimally. The Ward Clerks and Moderators do fill out paperwork thereafter and come down to the office. They are all demanded to attend a training session and they do put a lot of time and effort into it and they do put a lot of time and effort into it and they do have difficulty finding workers at the polls. On the other hand, I recognize that the City is under a budget crisis of sorts and I know at the last training session that we held last November we had talked to the workers about the three proposals that had been presented. The second proposal, which was a flat rate increase from \$150 to \$200 for Moderators and subsequently \$175 and \$150 for the others was what they felt was acceptable to them without bleeding the City so to speak. That proposed election salary comes out to \$24,000 per election for those workers. If you were to do a proposal like that at this point in time with three elections facing us, we would be looking at about an additional \$29,000. I don't know if this is the proper time for the Board to consider it or if you want to allow it to come back but I think what the worker's are telling you is legitimately they are not really being paid an adequate fee for the work they are putting in. It is a long day regardless of whether it is busy or not busy. If it is not busy, sometimes it is a longer day. I guess Leo had asked the Board to consider it on their behalf and they are here to speak for themselves obviously. I understand the budget situation, too.

Alderman Shea stated Carol you said that \$29,000 would be needed.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied that would be for the three elections coming up. If the Board were to do this...basically it is an ordinance change because they are set by ordinance. If the Board were to do that ordinance change now for these three elections, that would be the total increased cost that we would be looking at.

Alderman Shea moved to approve proposal B for the election workers. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion.

Mayor Baines asked where is the money going to come from.

Alderman Shea replied that is what I am going to ask the Finance Officer. How much do we have in contingency?

Mr. Clougherty stated you started the night at \$180,000. You just moved \$34,000 for the election so you are down to about \$146,000.

Alderman Shea moved that the money be taken out of contingency. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion.

Alderman DeVries stated I have an additional question of Finance. We have further special elections that will be forthcoming. Have we calculated if we have enough in contingency to cover the rest of the elections?

Mayor Baines replied that was the total that she gave us.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated that included three elections, which would include your September 3, September 10 and November election.

Alderman Forest asked, Carol, which one of the three are we talking about here.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered it was the second proposal, which was a flat rate increase. I do have copies of those if you want me to distribute them.

Alderman Gatsas asked, Kevin, what did we start last year with. How much was in contingency last year?

Mr. Clougherty answered I think it was about the same, Alderman.

Alderman Gatsas asked and how much...was there anything left over.

Mr. Clougherty answered no. You will recall that we went through with Welfare and other so we had to deplete it. The \$180,000 has to last you the full year. You are in the first month and you are already drawing down on it considerably.

Alderman Gatsas stated I think we looked at this during the budget process. Certainly I don't have a question that the people working at the polls certainly deserve some consideration but we should have talked about this during the budget process. Just to bring it in less than 45 days since we closed the budget doesn't make sense to me. It was a process that we looked at. It was revenues that we had to adjust. It was budgets that we were going to look to cut and how can we as reasonable people bring this forward 45 days after the budget process? Did we not

think that this was going to be a crisis for the two elections that we were going to have? I guess it is a question and I am not going to get an answer because there is nobody in the hot seat.

Mayor Baines replied again the proposals came forward and they were not approved during the process. That is my recollection of it.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated during the budget process we had presented the proposals to the Board. They had referred them to the Finance Committee and we brought it to the Finance Committee's attention during the budget process but no action had been taken on it at the time.

Mayor Baines asked could you just review with the Board the financial implications of the third proposal.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied proposal three for three elections would be \$12,210.

Mayor Baines asked more than we are paying right now.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered right.

Alderman Gatsas asked per election.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered no. It is \$4,070 per election so it comes to \$12,210.

Alderman Gatsas asked and option B is how much.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered \$29,100 for three elections. It is a \$9,700 difference.

Mayor Baines asked do you think if we accepted option 3 and made a commitment to work toward the implementation of option 2 that that would be acceptable in the next fiscal year.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered I think the election workers would be happy to be recognized with anything at this point. I can't really speak for them but I certainly think they would appreciate something.

Alderman Gatsas asked would the maker of the motion accept an amendment.

Alderman Shea stated my understanding was that the second option was the least expensive.

Alderman Gatsas stated no it is option 3, Alderman. It would be a 10% increase.

Alderman Shea withdrew his motion to approve option B. Alderman Thibault withdrew his second.

Alderman Thibault stated I understand what Alderman Gatsas is saying and I applaud him for bringing it up. The point is, when do these people bring this up? I think they brought it up at the right time. The fact that we tabled it or we sent it back to Committees and stuff is not their problem, it is our problem. I believe that they acted in good faith in bringing this thing up to this Board when it was the right time. The fact that it was not the right time for us, I don't believe should be their problem. I think it should be our problem. I admire what Alderman Gatsas is saying and I will go along with it provided that we put it in writing tonight, your Honor, that next year we are going to make sure that we take care of these moderators and these poll workers.

Alderman Shea moved to approve option C and transfer the money from contingency to the City Clerk's budget. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion. Mayor Baines called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

#### Resolutions:

“Amending the FY2002 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Forty Four Thousand Four Hundred Dollars (\$44,400) for FY2002 CIP 613102 Millyard Improvement Project.”

“Amending the FY2002 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Thirty Six Million Nine Hundred Thirty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Six Dollars (\$36,932,956) for FY2002 CIP 711702 Airside Improvements Project and 711802 Equipment Replacement Project.”

On motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to read the Resolutions by title only, and it was so done.

On motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted that the Resolutions ought to pass and be Enrolled.

CIP Budget Authorizations:

2001	220201	Tobacco Prevention Project - Revision #2
2002	613102	Millyard Improvement Program - Revision #1
2002	711702	Airside Improvements - Revision #1
2002	711802	Equipment Replacement - Revision #1
2002	712002	FBI Blower - Revision #1
2003	612003	MadVac SweeperAnti-Graffiti Program

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to approve the CIP budget authorizations subject to final adoption of related resolutions.

**TABLED ITEM**

7. Copy of a communication from Sgt. Lloyd Doughty, President of the NH D.A.R.E. Officers Assoc., seeking support for the program by sponsoring an ad in the Souvenir Program Book which will be distributed to those in attendance at the Benefit Flag football game to be held on Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 PM at Singer Park.

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman Forest, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee